

Education and Enlightenment

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Gymnasiepædagogik, Nr. 16. 2000

GYMNASIEPÆDAGOGIK

Nr. 16

November, 2000

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Campusvej 55

DK 5230 Odense M

Print: University of Southern Denmark

Oplag: 200

ISSN: 1399-6096

ISBN: 87-7938-017-4

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Preface

Lectures at seminars and conferences often result in creating contact with people who share your own interests.

My interests and the research have concentrated upon education, enlightenment and lifelong learning. These are universal themes, however, at the same time they must be viewed from the cultural background of each country. In this case the Danish culture.

This booklet contains selections of lectures and speeches, held either at conferences for researchers and educators, or as public lectures for everyone interested in education, enlightenment and learning: The lectures have been held at the following places: International Ecumenical Consultation, Chicago, USA (1995) Ministry of Education and Training, Hanoi, Vietnam (1996), International Forum on Youth, Japan (1996), Public Lecture, Eldoret University, Kenya (1997). International Conference on Education and Development, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, India (1999) Public Lecture, Mbale Municipal Hall, Uganda (1997 and 2000).

I address a special thank to the women at Mbale Municipal Hall, Uganda, who in the spring of 2000 repeated the request to get the lectures and speeches printed. The reason was that education and enlightenment are the very foundation of change. This applies, not only to the countries of the third world, but also within my own country where we are moving towards a multicultural society.

November 2000

Lilian Zöllner

Education and Enlightenment

The Danish Ministry of Education, the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and the Territorial Development Service (TDS), OECD had a meeting in Copenhagen in June 1999. Key note speech was given by Henrik Nepper Christensen Head of department Ministry of Education Denmark. He said:

“The **knowledge** and **competence** of individuals and organisations will be the main asset or resource of corporations.

The base of knowledge is information. But as the flow of information constantly increases and becomes more and more easy to obtain – for instance through the Internet – the technological development accelerate. The inevitable result is that knowledge and competencies develops and spreads – and becomes obsolete – at an ever faster pace.

However one need to consider that even though information and “formalised” knowledge are fast and easily spread – it is only when different types of information are combined and used in the right context, that genuine new knowledge evolves.

Therefore the most important process arising from this development will be **learning**. That is learning to create, to comprehend and to use new knowledge and competencies on the back of the overwhelming stream of information.

Equally important is the ability to work in networks – also in informal networks. To combine information and to use it in a new context implies that people – as well as organisations and corporations – must bridge differences in skills, training and culture and work together.”

N.E.S. Grundtvig

To be able to understand the background of words in the Danish school tradition it is necessary to mention a man called N.F.S.

Grundtvig. In the book “N.F.S. Grundtvig” (1997) A. M. Allchin asks: “How are we to begin to introduce Grundtvig to a world in which his name is not even known? A distinguished Danish poet and critic, Poul Borum, said in a radio broadcast made in 1980:

“It is strange to think that Denmark’s greatest contributors to world literature, Grundtvig, Hans Christian Andersen and Kierkegaard were all active in Copenhagen in the 1840’s producing works that lie outside the three main genres – drama, the novel, poetry – that are dominant in the European literature of the time. Grundtvig wrote hymns, Andersen fairytales and Kierkegaard philosophical writings which often approach intellectual novels and the poetry of ideas – in the great wide world Kierkegaard is known and respected as a philosopher not as poet, Andersen is ‘merely’ a writer of children’s stories, and Grundtvig is unknown.

Yet Grundtvig is not really known within Denmark either. We read Andersen as children and take him with us through life; some of us discover Kierkegaard (...) but Grundtvig is enormous and formidable and mysterious and remote, and seems to be reserved as it were to two strange races called ‘Grundtvigians’ and ‘Grundtvig-scholars’. Even so there is of course a Grundtvig for the people...”

Short Historic Retrospect

In 1849 a new constitution was agreed upon in Denmark, introducing democratic rule. N.F.S. Grundtvig thought that real democracy could function only on condition of enlivenment and enlightenment. It was important for the people to be able to look upon themselves as responsible citizens.

Denmark was an agricultural country, and the peasants were the majority of the inhabitants. Therefore Grundtvig has especially had the peasants in mind, when he talks about the people in his writings. Besides, the agricultural reforms had resulted in the fact that the peasants were able to live and work on their own farms. Naturally, therefore Grundtvig had especially had the peasants in mind, when he formulated his visions about popular enlightenment.

However, it was important to Grundtvig that the popular enlightenment had the quality of a political purpose, so therefore he con-

sidered the existing school inadequate to solve this assignment in an appropriate way. The existing school emphasized the learning of information, which Grundtvig considered not to be the right form of teaching. The aim was enlightenment.

Educational ideas in the Past

The pedagogical debate in the past was mostly about two matters:

- 1) Reciprocal teaching which was a school programme, received from England. In short, the system is that the pupils, to a great extent, teach each others.
- 2) The second discussion was about Grundtvig's vision about an institution, representing a real alternative to the learned education at the universities. The new institution was meant to address not only future Government officials, but also – and especially – broader circles.

Besides, the teaching that was to be implemented, had to have a certain view of human nature that could be mutual, shared by everyone. One of the central concepts of this view of human nature was that man had “spirit”, that he was more than just a biological product. When Grundtvig thought that a common view of human nature – which had to be common and mutual to both Christians and non-Christians – was a necessary condition of the teaching, it was a result of a personal clarification which he had reached already in the eighteen thirties, giving him a possibility to point out that schoolwork is a purely human and common popular matter.

The Substance of the Teaching in Relation to the Assignment

Grundtvig uses the term popular enlightenment in his writings. Using these words he means in the first place that enlightenment must originate from life itself. The enlightenment, which the young students was to be given, ought to be on the present and the rele-

vant to them. It was to have its roots in the young persons and in the life of the people, as each individual lives against the background of historic development. Each individual is marked by historic development and cultural heritage, causing ethical valuations and expectations of life to originate from this.

Secondly, the teaching should be lively which meant that it could not be based upon abstract ideas, but had to be founded upon concrete matters which everyone was able to relate to himself. It was very important to Grundtvig that the spoken word was used – the dialogue – instead of the written word -the book. In this way a possibility would be created that the teachers and the students might carry on a dialogue, might hold a conversation about matters which were essential and important, thus making it possible for the students to contribute with views from their own lives. Only in this way Grundtvig saw a possibility of an engaging “true enlightenment”. In addition, great importance was attached to singing, as liveliness and cheerfulness would help the teaching be alive.

The third condition for enlightenment to be true enlightenment is that the teaching aims towards life. This means that the teaching must strive towards life. Here Grundtvig thought both of practical everyday life and human life as such. Grundtvig imagined a number of workshops where the young persons’ practical experiences might be combined with the teaching.

It was important that the highest aim for the enlightenment was to make clear what is the meaning of the life we lead. Such purpose could not be reached unless people listened to poetry and history, because the mythical-poetical language contained expressions which could not be expressed directly in ordinary words.

To summarize his ideas about education Grundtvig thought that the school had to concentrate upon life, upon what was common to mankind, namely the living, the common, in short, everything that was commonly shared.

The Common

“The common” is what the whole population has in common, despite age, sex, education, economic and social status. Behind this

stress upon the common is Grundtvig's fear of the subversive forces of individualism. The history of the people, the language (the mother tongue), the geographic and political conditions, and the cultural peculiarity all create a frame around the self-realisation of a people. Everything that was common, that could be shared, was the "folkelige" to Grundtvig.

The word "folkelig" is very difficult to translate, it is a very Danish concept. However, I think it can be translated to "community life, embracing everyone". There is a Slavic word *narodnyi* which is something like it, and also the Hungarian word *nepi*. According to Grundtvig the peculiarity of a people shows in the figurative language, characteristic of the myths. Further Grundtvig points at the proverbs in which the experience and wisdom of the people are expressed in short precise sentences. Finally the peculiarity of a people is manifested in the mother tongue in which it is possible to express everything that can not be possible in a foreign language.

To Grundtvig it was very important to make a distinction between "the folkelige" or commonly shared from the popular, in the sense of what the general public, the man in the street, generally prefers or likes. The popular was the opposite of "the folkelige", as the popular is understood to be everything that divides the exclusive, refined taste of the cultured educated elite and the not so refined – not to say vulgar – preferences of the masses. "The folkelige" did not create any barriers, being an inclusive concept, expressing what *all* the inhabitants of a country can agree upon.

Further "the folkelige" is not an expression that reflects racism as "the folkelige" has its roots in what we commonly share, and which you can choose. Each individual can choose his community. To the people belongs everyone who have chosen this community. Or in other words, one particular group can not define that only those who are born in a certain country, or at a certain time, can be members of the community. From this definition it is also possible *not* to choose "the folkelige" community.

Grundtvig expressed that "the folkelige" could not be compared directly with the concept of something national or national consciousness. Behind the concept of "the folkelige" is a universal view of human life, based upon the imagination that man is created, and that he is responsible. This means that "the folkelige" has a norm

outside itself, and that the human race grows in interaction with others and in the challenges others give. If it was a matter of depriving others of their identity feeling, it would not be possible to interact or face new challenges – and in this way the spiritual development would come to an end.

Grundtvig's Ideas about Education in the Present

At the beginning Grundtvig expressed his visions about the højskoler and people's enlightenment in a certain historic period in which it was important to make a feeble democracy work.

Today we live in a democratic country, and our possibilities to get information and education are claimed to be optimal, compared with other countries. Therefore there are very good reasons to ask the following question:

What basis is there for the continued existence of the folkehøjskoler in Denmark? What are the conditions of life enlightenment today? What are the challenges the højskoler have to face today?

In the nineteen eighties the rising bureaucratizing of the administration, both locally and governmental, was heavily criticised. To try to meet this critic the Government took a number of initiatives to let local communities make their own decisions. Important concepts in the debate were “the individual” and “the local communities”, “self-administration”, “self-activating.

The intentions were that each individual citizen was allowed to decide the priority of a large number of possibilities in the local community.

Parallel with this development there was an increase in the amount of unemployed people. This made the Government take initiative to further mobilising the popular enlightenment. The idea was to build a bridge between the enlightenment, the inservice training, the fight against unemployment, and viable production. In nineteen-eighty-nine new perspectives were opened to involve various age groups in the højskoler and in this way contribute to a solution of the problem of unemployment, for example by adult education classes for people with little knowledge acquired at school.

Grundtvig's ideas about education were founded upon everything that was common to mankind, namely life itself, including daily ordinary life. Contrary to this was a wish to educate people to be able to manage very specific duties in their working life. The possibilities to qualify for the working life by schooling – thus avoiding unemployment – had resulted in the fact that an increasing number of people wanted qualifying education. In this way the højskoler were not any longer a clear alternative to the established, qualifying education. However, they might become part of these offers, which was considered dangerous. With that the højskoler would not differentiate from other educational institutions, where great importance was attached to the learning of specific skills in order to qualify for a job.

If the højskoler began to offer subjects and classes which considered this requirement, the essence of the work of the højskoler – which was their strength – would be given lower priority. Their strength was in the Grundtvig tradition where the essential is to enlighten the life we all have in common, regardless of work or not. Certainly, maybe this element would not disappear completely, but there was a danger, that the life-qualifying enlightenment about the common would become secondary, and the job-qualifying education primary.

Against the background of the development a debate on the objectives of the højskoler was bound to come. This debate culminated in the passing of a new law for the højskoler on the 1st July 1993. It was stated that the purpose of the højskoler was popular enlightenment: Popular enlightenment has been chosen as the definition of the main purpose because it expresses the tradition which has to be maintained and further developed: Enlightenment on common ideas, interpretation of life and the importance of this life .

An analysis of this purpose shows very clearly that is indeed not knowledge or professional qualifications that are most important. To understand your life and the meaning of your life is not knowledge to which the academically trained person can insist on having better answers than the layman. The meaning of your life only depends only upon each individual and his own living conditions. The meaning of your life can not be learnt or handed over, it has to be discovered, experienced, and reconized by each individual.

The Condition of Life Enlightenment

The conditions of life enlightenment today have radically changed since Grundtvig's time. Grundtvig's intentions were that enlightenment originates from life. Today life has become confused without any inner coherence. We think life consists of single units which we can handle, one at a time. We solve each problem in an isolated way, without any sense of the fact that the complexity of life is disappearing.

There are several reasons for this:

In the first place because an inversely proportional situation has entered our lives. The smaller the world has become, the greater are our possibilities to get information about life in other places of the world. The development of the means of communication has been so immense that we receive only short messages about occurrences, both globally and locally.

This leads to another problem: the greater knowledge we are presented with, the less coherence we can find. We lose the possibility to view problems in a wider perspective and therefore try to solve each problem as if it were an isolated phenomenon.

To solve problems demands knowledge and breadth of view. If a great proportion of the people fails to have this, the experts are left to find solutions to our problems. So we are in a situation where we receive more and more knowledge, but choose the experts to find the answers that have to be given. This results in a third problem:

The more we need experts to solve the problems, the less is the understanding we get about the various parts of the life, we all have in common. To push it to extremes, life can be split up into one life which is common for the people, and one which the experts take care of.

More than ever the højskoler need the interaction between the scholars and the people, if enlightenment is still to be considered the essence.

Challenges

The new law emphasized the fact that enlightenment on common ideas, interpretation and understanding of life, and the meaning of

life were most essential to the højskoler. With this aim an attempt has been made to maintain the ideas about education which Grundtvig expressed. This is very important, because we face not only unemployment and the experts' solutions of vital questions in life, but also other problems, namely the problems about courage and capability in life.

This demands further explanation.

In spite of the fact that we are living in one of the richest countries in the world, and the fact that we live in a country where there is a possibility of social security – unemployment or not – in spite of all this, we have in Denmark a very high frequency of suicides, especially among young persons. So it has not been enough to give the rising generation an academic or technical education, and it has not been sufficient to provide for their physical survival by giving them supplementary benefit or other forms of economic support.

Maybe the reasons for the increasing lack of courage and spirit can be found in the light of the fact that to a wide extent enlightenment has been viewed from an institutional point of view. The politicians and the institutions have made a great effort to organize an education which considered the needs that beforehand were well defined. However, it is very important to look at the problematics from the participants' point of view: each individual decides himself if he wants to have an education. The politicians and the institutions may open up opportunities and offer various subjects. However, the final decision is with the individual. Inclination and engagement can not be ordered, but these two elements are of crucial importance for the process of learning.

This condition leads to the question: What is the unique process that provides the background for people's immediate need to be educated for life, and which are the factors that result in real enlightenment?

It is a challenge to all schools to be able to answer all these questions.

Another problem is that in people's enlightenment there has been a tradition of the dialogue, the dialogue to be understood as contributing to the exchange of views that are the basis of the democratic decisionmaking process.

To Grundtvig the essence of the matter was enlightenment, making it possible for each individual to enter into a democratic decision-making process. Responsibility towards yourself and towards society comes from this process. However, it is not enough to be part of the decision-making process, if it does not result in action.

Young Danes

The Social Learning Process

In the developmental psychology the concept of socialization has traditionally been used to describe the child's social development, that is to say the development of the ability to co-operate, the development of a sense of community and other social connections, and to be able to understand other people and habits.

However, it is necessary to undertake a differentiation. The interesting point is not that practising certain social and well-reputed skills can develop a child's social ability. Or in other words: that a child can learn to adjust itself to the norms of society and to social practice. Such a socialization of the individual is bound to make the child and the young people easy preys to indoctrination, aiming at a further adjusted socialization.

Instead the interesting point is to examine how to teach the child how to relate to its social surroundings and reality in such a way that the child itself feels that he is taking part in the process. In short: How to teach the child to be participating in decision-making and to be co-responsible for the development of a democratic society. Such a political, consciousness-raising general education implies that the children are confident about their own common sense, e. g. by making clear that habits and norms can be discussed. They get a possibility of expressing opinions concerning their own situation.

In Denmark this social learning process is very complex as the children from they are born and through their years of growth are influenced by many widely different institutions, by single individuals, and by near relatives. Today the majority of the young people has been looked after in a day nursery, or with a day-care mother in a private home. Later they have been in a kindergarten, and the first years at school they have gone to a youth centre after

school. So, in one day a seven-year-old child may meet educators such as parents and stepparents, brothers and sisters, pedagogues in the centre, teachers at school, pedagogues in the youth centre, before returning to the family in the evening.

At the weekends the child may meet the part of the parents who lives away from the home or has remarried. In such a home there may be stepbrothers and sisters who may take part in the process of socialization.

None of the institutions are identical in Denmark as the parents have a very great influence on the priority of values. Thus, in a day, the child moves from one institution to another and learns that different values and norms are in force in these various institutions, and that these norms and values are all valid in the Danish society, although they vary in strength and emphasis.

It is not only the parents who are influential towards the institutions – the children and the young people are influential, too. They have been used to questioning the older generation's attitudes and its way of living, and as a result these questions make the children consider how they want to live their own lives and what they want to emphasize when the issue is to develop the country and thus create optimal conditions for the next generation.

Living Conditions While Growing Up

In Denmark the young people of today have grown up at a time where the *core family is dissolving*. It is anticipated that 40% of the parents who married after 1970 will divorce. This implies that the majority of the young people during their childhood and youth have had the experience of a divorce, either in their own homes or with friends. While growing up these young people have been influenced by their parents wish to *express and fulfil themselves* – which, to some degree, they have given a higher priority than the children's need for security and stability. Marriage as an institution has always existed, however, with various participants. Parents re-marry, and stepmothers and stepfathers continue to educate their own or their common children. It is not unusual in Denmark to talk about *your children, my children, and our children*.

Another characteristic feature of the growing up of the young people of today is that *the families are smaller*. The parents have chosen to have fewer children, resulting in the fact that quite often the network is not strong enough. In Denmark a large family of brothers and sisters – which in itself can be a socializing factor – is very unusual.

A third characteristic feature in the growing up of the young people has been *paid care of the children*. During the 1980'ies the number of day-care centres for children has been increasing considerably, the result was that care in the family became care that was paid for. The process of socialisation was divided between the kindergarten, the youth centre, the school, and the home.

A fourth characteristic feature is that the young people grow up at a time where their parents and other adult persons around them have evidently had difficulties in mastering their own lives. 1) The unemployment has been increasing within later years in Denmark, 2) there is a marked rise in early deaths (in the parent generation), 3) to be able to manage the day-to-day pressure there is a marked rise in the consumption of psychopharmacological drugs, and 4) the number of suicides in the parent generation is growing. To summarise, it can be said that the family has become weak and vulnerable. In the OECD-countries the average duration of the life of fathers has fallen from a 5th to an 18th place, and if we consider the mothers, from an 8th to a 21st place. Quite the contrary to Japan which in 1990 occupied the leading place, concerning both men and women.

So, the young people have been able to witness that the values that were behind their parent's upbringing did not necessarily give *them* a happy or harmonious life. The parents have tried to live according to this model: have a good education, a good job, get a family, and live conscientiously. The young people find that because of a large number of various parameters of society this model has not brought their parents the expected good life, and therefore the young people have to question how they want their own lives to be.

Values in the Upbringing

The young people have been influenced by the values that have been valid in Danish society through generations: equality and re-

spect of the value and responsibility of the individual. In step with the fact that the family has become vulnerable the attention has been concentrated upon the value of independence, working on the assumption that if the children were to be able to manage in a quickly changing society the parents had to weight the promotion of independent decision-making and action.

At school the young people have been influenced by the values that are expressed in the Education Act from 1975, and they are as follows:

- * Comprehensive development
- * Imagination
- * Co-responsibility
- * Intellectual liberty
- * Democracy
- * A sense of community and common assignment
- * Participation in the decision-making processes
- * The desire to learn
- * Independence

Especially it has been emphasized to educate children and the young people to be independent, on the grounds that they have to be able to participate in democratic discussions where opinions co-
interact.

A Picture of the Young Danes in 1999

Fewer Young People

A recent study shows first and foremost that we are viewing a dramatic fall in the population of young people and that it will continue until 2004. The estimate is that the number of young people will not be at its summit until 2020. Of course this fall gives rise too much concern because of the great burden of social expenses, which will be imposed upon these young people. In Denmark all education, from pre-school to university is free (the expenses are paid via the tax system – thus young people pay about 50% of their income in tax, the older generation about 60%). Further all medical

aid, including hospitalizing, is free, all elderly and old people get a state pension, and the state gives large subsidies to social expenses for the weakest people. Besides, the young people get economical support during their education (for food, accommodation, clothes etc.).

There is a great interest in knowing what the young people give a high priority, how they want to live their lives, and how they want society to develop. The older generation is conscious of the fact that the burden of social expenses can be very great for these young people, on the other hand the older generation want to maintain the standard of living and the social security which they have paid to all their lives.

An Inhomogeneous Group

The youth group in Denmark has changed significantly within later years as we in Denmark have received many refugees from Turkey, Ex-Yugoslavia, and other countries. These young people have grown up with different values, resulting in the fact that we can no longer say that we have a homogenous group of young people. Further it has appeared that the young people are very mobile – meaning that they go abroad to be educated, to work, or to get experience and learn to know other people. So it is much more difficult to predict, upon which values these young people will base their development of society, and upon which values they will educate their children. Possibly there is a sign of a growing internationalisation among young people.

Young People Give a High Priority to Education, Work, and a Stay Abroad

Within later years there has been a marked rise in the number of young people who want an education. In 1981 49% of the 15-24 years old were in the process of training, in 1994 55%. Further, there has been a marked rise in the number of young people who work *at the same time* when they are in the process of training. A large number of young people who are not formally in the process of training go abroad to work or to get other experiences. Very often the parents try to motivate the young people to go abroad and live in other cultures, thus getting an insight in themselves and the values they emphasize. In this way the young people become important to the changes of attitudes in society.

Young People Choose to Live by Themselves

More than half of the 15-24 year old people live with one of the parents or with both. A third live in a self-contained flat which they have rented or bought, the remainder live in student hostels or youth pensions. When the young people are 25 years old most of them have left their homes. The majority moves when they are between 20 and 25, after this age not more than 10% live with their parents. Most young women move earlier than the young men, the reason is that the young women mature earlier and enter into partnerships earlier than the young men.

It is a consequence of the parents giving a high priority to educate the young people to independence and responsibility that the young people move away from home, but it is also a consequence of the parents giving a high priority to their own wish to fulfil and express themselves. As I mentioned earlier the family pattern is marked by instability which makes the young people try to create an existence outside the family circles. The family ties are loosened.

Culture and Leisure Time

The young people spend remarkably less leisure time watching TV than the parent generation, but they frequently use the public libraries, more often than the parents. They want information by studying technical literature and by using the internet. They give a high priority to keeping fit through sports and other exercise, and they spend a lot of time listening to music or playing an instrument. The leisure time is not spent on being criminal (the rate of criminals among the young people is falling); instead it is spent on what the parent generation would call sensible leisure time activities.

Politics

The young people are not very interested in being a member of a political association or party. On the other hand, they are very active in NGO-work. Thus almost 80% of the young ones have participated in grassroots activities and prefer, to a greater and greater extent, to express their attitudes to the development of society by being contrary to a political affiliation and by formulating demands to public authorities, thus influencing the attitudes of the population. In this way democracy is able to change and in the future

be marked with a greater consciousness about unjust or unwanted conditions.

Values

A research¹ shows that the young people from 16-18 years give a very high priority to the values 1) love, 2) friendship, 3) health, 4) safety and security in the family, 5) peace in the world. These are their aims.

Contrary to this, practice shows that fewer and fewer young people choose to live in couples than earlier. This does not mean that the young ones do not have love affairs or friendships, but it means that they choose not to marry. Statistics show that more and more young people now choose to live together without being married. So the young people do not wish to engage themselves in a binding relationship which a marriage is even though they aim at security in a family. They move together, maybe they have children, and live together for some years 'to be sure that a marriage will have a good basis to become a lasting marriage'. That this is not the safest way can be seen in the statistics concerning divorces. Among the young people who choose to marry the rate of divorce is 3-4 times as big as for the population on the whole.

Further the study shows that more and more young people choose to live alone without any obligation to children or spouse. They choose to have long-lasting loveaffairs or friendships instead of having a core family. In other words, more and more young ones lead a solitary life and choose to have children much later in their lives.

On the other hand, the young people give a high priority to health, which is quite according to their way of living. They live in a more healthy way than their parents (smoke less, drink less, and go in for sports). They do not expose themselves to any danger, which shows in the statistics of the average expectations of life.

Social Behaviour

The Young Danes are considered to be almost 'too nice'. It is commonly recognized that the young generation is expected to rebel

and to criticise society. The young Danes are conservative in their behaviour and manners. They do not differ from the norms; there is no need to use resources to fight mobbing or criminal behaviour. Mobbing was a problem in the 60'ies and the beginning of the 70'ies, but today it is very rare in the Danish society. And *if* mobbing occurs the young ones very often solve the problem themselves, they do not expect parents or teachers to do so.

The parents expect that their children are independent people who are able to make decisions concerning their own lives. They expect that they are aware of the social responsibility, which is a natural result of living in a rich country. It is, among other things, part of this social responsibility to try and make optimal conditions for the many refugees who have come to Denmark from devastated countries. It is expected that the young people look upon the world with an inquiring mind and curiosity, enabling them to change old habits and customs. They are expected to use their fantasy and imagination to create good lives for themselves and others.

This wish to create a good life for yourself and others was the background of the parent generations rebelling and experimenting. It was their rebellion, which resulted in a change of the family structure, and that the young people's childhood and adolescence became so different. Today the young generation wants to have safe frames; they want a family life without changing parents. They are cautious and wait to marry and have children till later in life.

However, the divorce percentage among the young people shows that they have been under the influence, too, that life must not be too troublesome and difficult. This, I think, is a great problem. The young people have no 'courage to endure'; that is to say they have no courage to endure that sometimes life is hard, that you cannot always expect to be happy. They have had easy lives with tangible goods, they have seen the parent generation's attempt at being happy by getting tangible goods, seen them express and fulfil themselves, seen their divorces. The parent generation did not want life to be difficult and hard; neither do the young people. – In most people's lives there are both sorrow and trouble, and the experts cannot solve these problems. In recent years a sort of 'expert society' has come into existence here in Denmark, and it

is expected that these experts solve all the problems which up till now were solved by the family or by friends.

As a result of the global development the young generation cannot expect the same prosperity in just as short a time as the parent generation. The young people have to include the global perspective in their considerations concerning the wishes for their lives – and it is necessary for them to look upon life from other angles than a maximum of happiness.

The Responsibility of Parents and Teachers

Within later years studies have been made which show which values the Danes emphasize. A pattern can now be seen that the Danes in their upbringing of their children give a higher priority to the values of independence, self-realisation, and freedom than to the values that are dealing with the common. Since 1991 there is a tendency to give a higher priority to the private and self-orientated values as e. g. social recognition, love, security in the family, keeping up the image, selfrealisation, and freedom. This higher priority to self-orientated values implies that society has moved away from the common and that now there is a tendency to indifference to other people.

In 1990 a large study was implemented on young people's attitude towards moral². The study shows that at sixteen the young people thought, to a large extent, that it was immoral that the parent generation did not give a higher priority to family life. They pointed to the fact that the children lost confidence in the adult and in the future when the parents chose to divorce. The young people thought that it was very important to consider the responsibility of having children, and to give this a higher priority than self-realization. Further the study shows that the young people considered it immoral that old people, to a greater and greater extent, are left to themselves in old people's homes. For many years the tradition has been in the Danish culture that the state offered to take care of the old when the need was there. The young people thought that this was excellent, however, they thought that the parent generation ought to keep in better contact with the old. The grandparent's well

being was very important in the young people's minds; they considered the parent generation's treatment of the old as irresponsible.

Young parents are very conscious to change development. They are not quite young when they have their first baby, and they try to plan their lives so that they can have much more time with the baby than their parents had.

The State has contributed practically to support this attitude. Parents (both mothers and fathers, in turn) may obtain parent-leave and receive a certain percentage of their income as long as they take care of the child themselves. It is as yet too early to know what it means in the long run that the parents give it a high priority to be together with the child instead of going to work, but it will no doubt show in the next generation of young people.

However, there are indications that this very group of children who have had so much attention from the parents will get a very difficult time in the kindergarten and the school. Focus has been upon them to such an extent that it is difficult for them to accept that the pedagogues and the teachers have other children to look after. From they were born they have been influenced to be so ego-centred that the social interaction with other children becomes difficult for them. And here lies, I think, the greatest challenge for the Danish adult generation.

Noter

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Equal Rights in the Light of Danish Culture

When we visit foreign countries our senses are all alert. We notice the attire, the lights of the towns, the landscapes, the behaviour of the inhabitants, etc. We wonder, ask questions, and try to put the answers together so that they make sense. After few days in a country we have already accustomed ourselves so much to the strangeness that it has become a matter of course. We have stopped noticing the peculiar street scene, the women's attire, or the behaviour of the inhabitants. It is like examining a house the very first time. The guest notices the entrance, the maybe lopsided door, the colour of the walls, the light in the room, the dripping tap. If you mention this to your host he will most often be surprised. He has got so used to his surroundings that he does not notice its peculiarities.

All put together the various impressions give us an idea of the image that society tries to give its population, an image which contains values, traditions, and standards.

Values Originate in the Basis of the Evangelical Lutheran

In Denmark these values, traditions, and standards originate in the basis of the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine. If the Danes were asked, few would answer like this, however we have become so accustomed to it that we do not include it in our considerations or explanations.

We have a society where the Monarch is a born member of the Danish Lutheran Church (the State Church) and formally the head of the Church. About 90% of the population are members of the State Church. They pay church rates, still, they seldom use the Church. On an ordinary Sunday about 2% of the Danish population go to Church, at religious festivals there are some more, and especially at Christmas time the Church is the place where the pastor and his

parish meet. Instead of using the Church in their daily lives the majority choose to use the Church at a time when they are *unaware* that they are there, namely when they are dead. The percentage of Christian burials is 93 – meaning that persons who are not members of the Church want to use it when they take leave of the world. In other words: the Danes have a Church which is the basis of our values. However, it is the values we use in our daily lives – not the Church.

According to the Lutheran-Evangelical doctrine you cannot reach God through the Church. It is not the case that the road to salvation goes through a pastor, a bishop, the Pope, or saints. Nor is it the case that the love of God appears only when man has done good deeds. On the contrary. In the Lutheran Church there are no barriers between God and man. An individual can pray to God directly, there is no need for a minister or a church. The relationship is an I-you relationship, man applies directly to God and vice versa. The individual needs no spokesman such as a minister, he can formulate his prayers according to the problems he is grappling with. On the contrary, the individual receives the love of God whether he has done many good deeds, few, or none at all. It is not the number of good deeds that is decisive to the love of God or salvation. Instead man is forgiven beforehand, and consequently he does good deeds. Man receives love without performing anything – and because this love is bestowed unconditionally upon him he cannot help giving other people love.

According to the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine all men are equal. Love is not bestowed proportionally upon man, dependent on his efforts. Or in other words: man has equal rights to receive the love of God. And man is something in himself, and not only by force of his deeds. Man is of value, whatever social status, education, work, etc. This view of humanity leads to the value of equality. In other words, equal value and equal rights originate in the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrines.

The Values of the State Church in the Health System

In the old days the monasteries took care of the sick. It was an ecclesiastical task to take care that the convents had an infirmary (Latin: *infirmus*: weak) where the sick, the worn out, and the weak were looked after.

At the Reformation this became the task of the State. As an example it can be mentioned that the Monastery of Our Lady in Aarhus was transformed into the Hospital of Our Lady. Today it is a nursery home. According to the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrine everybody has the right to nursing and care in case of illness. They are considered to be equal, and in the treatment there must be no discrimination of the citizens, be he a person with a high or low social status, a high or low income. Nor is it allowed that the treatment depends upon the patient's possibilities of returning to the labour market or he will remain unemployed.

Our health system and Hospitals are public. The State pays the treatments, thus securing that the value of equal worth and equal rights are observed. The money comes from our taxes, considering that we all have the obligation to help the weak and ill. It lies in our Christian faith that it has to be like that, and the Danes regard private clinics and hospitals with suspicion. The suspicion is not a result of the belief that the work done at these hospitals and clinics is not good enough. No – the suspicion is a result of the fact that these private hospitals do not consider the basic values of Danish society. You have to be able to pay to go to one of these hospitals. And thus the basic values of equal rights and equal worth are broken. A person who is able to pay for the treatment precedes others who are on a waiting list for treatment. When it is possible to be treated before others, this very possibility signals that some human lives are more valuable than others, for instance because they have an economic, social, or political status.

The Danish health system varies from the systems in most other countries where it is necessary that the individual takes out an insurance to get the same service as in other countries. By comparing the health system in other countries the basic values in our country are elucidated.

The Values of the State Church in the Educational System

To a very high degree the Lutheran State religion influences our educational system. To a large extent the development is the same as within the health system.

In 1479 The University of Copenhagen was founded by the King, and at that time most professorships were sponsored by the Church – and theology was the most important study. This was the case not only in Denmark, but all over Europe.

In the same way as the monasteries had taken care of the sick, the Church had taken care of education. The State took over at the Reformation. It can be mentioned, as an example, that convent schools and cathedral schools were taken over by the King, and the Church initiated education on behalf of the State, and in principle this education was meant to be for everyone, according to the basic values.

The view of humanity and the values which the Lutheran State religion is based upon, are expressed in all Education Acts through history. Education was and is for everybody. Everybody has an equal right to get the knowledge which is decisive for everybody to be able to mark development. Education is not reserved for the rich in society, and there are no classes for a special elite. The State pays all school expenses, books, education, buildings, wages, etc.

Similar to the difficulties of the Danish private hospitals there a few private schools for the children of the elite. We have a few, but the majority of the children attend the state school – the ‘folkeskole’.

By studying the Education Acts through history it is more and more obvious that the Lutheran values and view of humanity have always been decisive. This is interesting because the values which the school emphasises are the values which mark society at all times. For the school will – at all times – be the place where values are imparted to the future adult generation. This imparting of knowledge will be decisive when young people – few years after they have left school – have the right to vote, thus participating in a democratic development.

The Education Act from 1937 stated that the education emphasize ethical values and respect of human life. That is in the sense that a human life is worth something in itself and not only if it is useful to society. A child who is poorly endowed intellectually or a child who is physically or socially handicapped is – by force of its human worth – entitled to respect. Such a child has just as much right to education, care, and doctor’s help as a child who easily

acquires knowledge and who will be expected to repay the investments of society when he has grown up.

In the later Education Act from 1975 the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrine still forms the basis of the Act. In this Act the concept of community and solidarity is essential. "The Education Act is supposed to prepare the pupils to understanding and co-determination in a democratic society and to co-responsibility towards the solution of common tasks." It was a common task to develop a welfare state where the most essential was that the prosperous, the strong, the well functioning were supposed to help the poor, the weak, the handicapped, the suffering. It was not meant to be a society where it was reserved for the children of prosperous parent to have a long-cycle higher university education. On the contrary, the issue was to try to help the weak so that everybody – irrespective of their social background – had an equal right to education. Denmark is one of the few countries in the world where all young people above 18 get economic support (SU = The State Education Fund) during their studies. This support is spent on food, accommodation, clothes, books etc.

In the latest Education Act from 1993 the value of equality is directly mentioned, however, at the same time it is emphasised that children and young people have not only become acquainted with their rights, but also with the duties of a society in which the weak are considered and respected.

The values of equal rights and equal worth are so deeply rooted in the soul of the Danish people that we do not notice the consequences of this priority of values until we become acquainted with the educational system in other countries. Because the consequences must be that any citizen at any time can be educated, thus being able to be co-determining and co-responsible for the development of society. Consequently the educational system must be a free – or almost free – offer to the individual from the cradle to the grave. And this is what it is. The man or woman – irrespective of age – who suddenly gets the time to study at a university, a college, or a course can do so without paying more than a symbolic amount of money for it. To a large extent the State pays the study for unemployed people. The reason for this is the consideration for the weak. Or in other words: solidarity with the weak.

The Values of the State Church in the Perspective of Enlightenment and Society

As earlier mentioned, the revolt which Martin Luther initiated against the Catholic Church and which resulted in so far-reaching consequences to development in Northern Europe was a revolt against the monopoly of the Church, of the contact with God, and the road to salvation. Luther maintained that in his prayer the layman was just as close to God as the minister. The examination paper was no proof concerning the relationship between God and man. Nor was it his position in life. The ordinary citizen or 'the common man' had the same possibility of salvation. It was not the reeling off of deeds that was decisive to the love of God.

Today the very basic values concerning equality are expressed in both enlightenment connections and in society as such. In enlightenment connections the attention can be drawn to the free schools where Grundtvig from the very beginning formulated his criticism of the learned and the use of foreign languages. The folk high schools were established as a proof that society also at that time gave a high priority to the values of equality and equal rights. Grundtvig maintained that it was necessary to bridge the elite and the people. The folk high schools were intended to offer an education where there was a possibility of dialogue between the layman and the expert and where they – each from their own point of view – could elucidate a certain problem. The layman's contribution to the conversation concerning a certain problem was considered to be just as much worth as the expert's opinion. And they both had the equal right to try to find the truth by acquiring as much information as possible.

Since then the folk high schools have been part of Danish culture, and the concept of life enlightenment is closely connected with these schools. The concept of life enlightenment implies that the most essential contents is life itself. The life which we all have to live and which for the individual may result in the experience of happiness, despair, hope, confidence, powerlessness, and love. When we discuss a certain problem we use our experience of life or involve our ideas or considerations concerning the meaning of life, and we do so because it contributes to viewing the individual

contribute to include far more aspects in the solution of these problems.

The very idea of the value of the layman in relation to the expert has not become less important since Grundtvig began to talk of establishing folk high schools. Also today Danish society has given a high priority to the values of equality and equal rights, both within the judicial system, the social service, and the Church.

The layman is an important part of the judicial system. It is a civic duty, and because it is a question of non-experts in the judicial system the layman will be able to consider the crime or the problem from another angle. Considering the crime the layman will use his life experience and use this to elucidate the problem. Thus the very case – and consequently the statement of the accused – will be considered in another way than the legal system would do it, viz. a human consideration. Thus the presence of the layman ensures also the poor or the unemployed legal advice and equality before the Law.

Within later years it has been demanded that laymen be members of the ethical committees concerning medical research. The reason is that it is not sufficient to estimate whether a research project is ethically justifiable according to method and plan. Since World War II a large number of examples have proved that much medical research on a high technical and methodical level takes place around the world, however, very often this research must be considered completely unethical. For instance, in this connection I think of the research that concerns the dream of creating a super human being or a clean race. Further, attention can be called to research into the genetics of aboriginal populations and genetic engineering among the poor in the undeveloped countries. The demand that there are laymen on these committees manifests that consideration of the poor is given a high priority in any research project. It is the layman's task to promote and secure this consideration.

Further, attention can be drawn to the fact that the layman has an important function in ecclesiastical connections. A parish council chooses the pastor themselves – and this pastor is not necessarily a theologian. Some years ago there was a lack of pastors, and as a result an arrangement was made so that non-theologians were able to become pastors of the Danish State Church. And, finally there is

something specially Danish: 'valgmenigheder' (congregations formed by the voluntary union of a certain number of members of the Established Church) and independent congregations. In these congregations the principle of laymen is very important.

The Demand for a Sense of Community and Solidarity Originates in the Values

The continued emphasis upon equality and equal rights in the Danish society and the other Nordic countries can be maintained only because society is based upon a deep sense of community and solidarity, and because it is a homogenous society.

Contrary to other countries there are no minorities, clans, or kingdoms to consider. Nor are there within the Nordic countries linguistic difficulties which might be an obstacle to co-operation. Each country has one language (Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian), and we understand each other's languages without interpretation. Besides, we are not forced to take a position to various languages within our own borders. We do have some refugees and immigrants, however, in relation to the population figure it must be admitted that we are a homogenous society. Finally, we are not forced to consider who is representing the country abroad. All the Nordic countries are Kingdoms, and the Danish Royal Family is very popular.

As earlier stated the basic idea of the Nordic societies is the emphasis upon a *sense* of community and solidarity. This is the basis which we try to maintain by having made a political decision that this ideology must form the basis of the Education Act. Thus it is secured that from the very beginning the next generation is aware of the basic values of society. Likewise, it is the same ideology that forms the basis of people's enlightenment – and thus it is ensured that the adults continuously are influenced by the basic values.

The sense of community and solidarity secures that the strong pay for the weak – implying that it begins already when you are born and ends at old age. When you become parents society helps and grants a financial aid to each child. In case a person gets ill or unemployed, he gets a State allowance. When you get old society helps pay your housing, medicine, etc. Our whole society is so

thoroughly organised when the issue is help for the weak. And whatever is done, our Evangelical-Lutheran view of humanity and values pervades the legislation.

Likewise the sense of community and solidarity is expressed through the important organisations, working close to the Church, the Folkekirkens Nødhjælp 'Danchurchaid' and the Danish Red Cross that help at catastrophes around the world, and the Kirkens Korshær that relieves social distress within the country.

The Weakness of the Common Responsibility

As earlier mentioned the values of the Church is the basis of the legislation and arrangement of our society. As a result we live in one of the most affluent countries in the world. However, it is a matter of common knowledge that there is always a dark side of any picture – and this also applies to our society .

When attempts are made to describe the dark side of the picture it is necessary to involve the concept of responsibility. To be responsible implies that any human being must give an account of the actions which society demands from its members. In other words there are three links in the concept of responsibility:

1) The person giving the account 2) What the accounts are about 3) Who is receiving the account originally, the concept is both judicial and political. It is a statement that the acting person accounts for his actions and can be punished if these actions are inconsistent with the order of society.

In the present time the ethical responsibility must be involved besides the judicial and political, however, at the same time it is necessary to distinguish between them.

In our well organised society all actions are considered to be part of the exchange of goods with services. The old and weak person is given a number of hours' domestic care a week. Besides he gets free, ready made dinners which are brought to him in his home. A psychically ill person gets some hours' emergency relief by a psychologist who listens to his traumatic experiences. A dying person gets care in his home.

The judicial responsibility is that society has the duty to restore

the damages if the individual does not get the support he is entitled to. For instance it is the duty of society to find room at an institution (for instance old people's home) in case the domestic care is not sufficient. In short, it has become a purely economic responsibility. In short, the account can be balanced and when society pays, nothing wrong has happened.

In this way the ethical responsibility is left out, the ethical responsibility which means that you help without considering to get something back. This idea is behind the responsibility which an individual feels towards another person, be he neighbour, friend, colleague, pupil, or whoever you might meet.

Responsibility must be to be able to see the consequences of what one is doing and to be able to draw the line because of a conviction that you do not want to offend other people's lives. If the ethical responsibility is not involved in the debate concerning democracy and the protection of our democratic rights – then we are facing serious problems in the future.

Responsibility, the Roots of People's Enlightenment, and the Future

Originally people's enlightenment originates in the conviction of doing the good by giving the other an insight in the conditions of society so that the individual was able to be co-responsible to the development of society.

Today people's enlightenment faces great challenges when the issue is co-responsibility: it is necessary, not only in Denmark but also outside Denmark to focus the attention upon the fact that the concept of responsibility cannot stand alone. It is necessary to involve the concept of conscience on the grounds that otherwise we have lost the ethical dimension. In the modern world the ethical dimension can be deemed as being consideration towards the vulnerable. And today's theme belongs to the vulnerable – women and children. The challenge of people's enlightenment is in other words to involve the concept of conscience as an ethical resistance against all kinds of destruction of another person, both locally, nationally, and globally.

Values in an Educational and Gender Perspective

Education for all! This is a both important and worthy objective in any country at any time. It is an objective which demands no argumentation as most people agree that education and enlightenment are the very foundation of change. History has made it very clear that lack of enlightenment and education may lead to manipulation, abuse of power, and suppression.

Education for all is not only a question of money. Of course, it is *also* a question of money. But it is first and foremost a question of giving a high priority to values. It is a question which values a society at a certain time wants to forward and which values are to be impeded.

The Concept of Values

Values are first and foremost attached to the emotional aspect in us – we are unable to be indifferent towards events in our lives. As an example can be mentioned Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher, who resented suppression and cruelty and called to arms, and still was unable to find stronger arguments against such phenomena than that he did not like them. And he realized that this argument was not up to much.

Values give us guidelines how to meet the challenges of life, how we meet the people who cross the course of our lives, and how we look upon ourselves. These values guide us when we arrange our lives and they are important to the decisions we make. They help us in our interpretation of the large number of information we receive every day from the surrounding world.

Common values constitute the very foundation of the modern structure of society and they are passed on to future generations in the process of socialisation. In a modern society there is no agree-

ment as to which values are to be given a high priority. However, in most societies there is a general agreement and consensus concerning the fundamental values. Not only in a time of crisis, but also during longer and more quiet periods. The values are passed on from one generation to the next. They are learnt during the childhood, influenced by the adults who surround the child, viz. the parents, pedagogues, teachers, and grandparents. The values contribute to creating coherence in our lives. Without values our lives would be confused, meaningless, and incoherent.

The School as the Framework of Dialogue, Being Together, and Education

The school is of crucial importance when the issue is common values.

First and foremost because the school is the place where children and adults talk together. It is in the education and in the dialogue with children and young people we teach them what is right and wrong, true and false, good and bad. In the school the children directly or indirectly are presented with the values of society, and the question of priorities of these values, and in the school the children and the young people have the possibility of having a dialogue with the teacher concerning the future of society. Therefore, the teachers and pedagogues are extremely important persons when the issue is to create a foundation for the development of a country. They are important persons when the issue is to impart to the new generations the knowledge of the wishes concerning the development of the country. And they are important persons when the issue is to give the new generations a competence which enables them to debate possible changes and changed priorities of values. Finally, they are important persons when they – each with her/his experience of life – are able to inform about the consequences of changes in the priorities of values.

Secondly, the school plays an important part concerning the common values, because the school has a social function. The school is the framework around the meeting between children, young people, and adults, each with their different backgrounds and hist-

ory of life. At school the children and young people learn the social skills which enable them to act socially and in common where the rules of society apply. At school the children and young people are confronted with demands of co-operation and interplay with other people, and they learn the social conventions of society. This does not signify that children and young people blindly and obediently adapt themselves to these social conventions. Instead it means that children and young people in common are able to debate which social habits and moral commands hold good at present, and which ones should be the future ones. The school makes it possible for children and young people to realise the consequences of their actions in a greater perspective. They have the possibility of seeing the school as a society which can be influenced and changed both from within and from the outside, and they have a possibility of seeing themselves as actors in this process of change. Thus the school becomes an incubator to try out a development of society, coming from the grassroots and based upon dialogue and being together.

Thirdly, the school plays a decisive part when the issue is common values, because the school is the framework of education. Through education we acquire the knowledge which is the foundation of solving the tasks of everyday life, and by solving these everyday tasks we are able to refine and extend the solutions, thus creating development. This process does not stop after primary school, it forms a constituent part of lifelong learning. Knowledge and insight are the very foundation of meeting new challenges, thus contributing to create change. In this way we become co-creators of the process of change, thus becoming able to take part in the debates as to where these changes are going to lead us. New knowledge, new inventions, and recently acquired experience can be used for both good and bad causes. It is important that the creators of new knowledge participate in the debates as to where this knowledge is going to lead us, and whether the ways and means a society wants to use are in accordance with the basic values of a society.

Together with dialogue and conversation, education is the very foundation of development and change. The framework can be the school, however, before the school it is the home, the local community or childcare institutions. Therefore, the development of a society must be viewed in the light of a gender perspective.

The Gender Perspective

Conversation and being together are constituent parts of the process of change which is initiated as soon as the child is born. The mother is, of course, the first and most important person in this dialogue. Through the language she gives the child an understanding of simple ideas, and she gives the child an insight in what is right and wrong. Through the language she teaches the child that some values are given a higher priority in society than others. We support the educating function of the language by saying that the child has drunk certain values with her/his mother's milk – hereby understanding that the imparting of values takes place through the mother, from the child is born and all through the childhood and youth. In all her dealings with the child – in the dialogue and being together socially – the mother influences the child to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, true and false. She expresses her influence directly or indirectly by expressing her enthusiasm or her reserve towards the social changes. Through her own behaviour she influences her child and other members of her community. Tolerance it not always expressed verbally, it can very clearly be expressed through the body language.

It became evident to me that our everyday language expresses something very important and fundamental about development when I, in connection with a research project concerning the meeting of cultures in Danish educational connections, was going to interview both young Pakistani and young Vietnamese. They all expressed that from their earliest childhood they had been influenced with some basic values through the mother tongue. It was not necessarily the same values which had been given a high priority in the Danish society, but it was the values which their parents gave a high priority, being both immigrants and refugees in Denmark. This influence formed the basis of the meeting with the values which the children came across when they started school in Denmark. The children already had a foundation which enabled them to decide their attitudes towards the influence of values which forms an inevitable part of any education. They were able to take a stand on the information they received. They were able to distinguish.

With this example I try to make it clear that it is extremely important to involve the gender perspective when the issue is education. It is important to look upon the mother/the woman as teacher and communicator of values. The woman is the first person to make the child express her/his ideas in words, thus creating the first condition of the freedom of speech. Therefore, it is extremely important to give the education of women a high priority.

Accordingly, the gender aspect was an important one in the Danish considerations concerning support to the developing countries. In various projects a conscious focus upon the women and their special function as “teacher” and communicator of values was called for. If and when the women are offered an education this investment will probably be returned ten times just because the woman is a teacher.

Crucial Values

For the last hundred and fifty years the values of freedom and equality have been an essential part of Danish literature. These values are mentioned and taken for granted in the description of the values which have been crucial when establishing the welfare state. However, freedom and equality are not the only values, together with a number of other values they have formed the basis of development in Denmark.

Which values have existed and are still so important in Denmark that the wish is to influence children and young people?

Before World War II – in the Education Act from 1937 – it was important that the school emphasized ethical and Christian values, love for the people and country, love for the home, deference to nature and life. Further, good behaviour, sincerity in speech and conduct, a sense of duty and order, and discipline were to be given a high priority. These values were so established in the culturally homogenous society that there were no changes until the passing of a new Education Act in 1975. (Of course, smaller amendments were passed, among others, that after 1948 the children in the country went to school every day, like the children in the towns).

As a result of the development of society values became part of

the pedagogical agenda. The values earlier mentioned were replaced with the values of diversified development, fantasy, co-responsibility, intellectual liberty, democratic participation, co-determination, desire to learn, independence and sociality. The concepts of democratic participation, co-determination and democracy are political expressions of values, and they have been debated both politically and pedagogically, and the concept of co-responsibility must be seen in relation to the responsibility of the school leaders. The law mentions the concept of intellectual liberty in stead of the concept of tolerance, and this is due to the fact that intellectual liberty signals that *truth* is not given beforehand, instead it must be debated freely and openly.

It is quite remarkable that all values from the 1937 Education Act were replaced when the new Education Act was passed in 1975. In other countries such a replacement of the values in an educational connection has given rise to crises and has been said to be the cause of a rise in the crime rate, vandalism, stealing, suicide, etc. In Denmark such causal connections have not been mentioned, however, we have not been able to avoid a prolonged debate concerning value crises, value nihilism, moral crises, and value pluralism.

In 1993 there was an amendment to the Education Act, this, however, did not result in a total replacement of values. Instead there was a minor revision. The Act now contains the following value-laden expressions: co-determination, co-responsibility, rights, duties, freedom, intellectual liberty, equality, democracy, personal development, energy and enterprise, absorption, energy, self-confidence.

The school is a decisive factor when the issue is to create common characteristics of behaviour and attitudes which both are carriers of identity and directions of education, from primary school to upper secondary education.

Values or value-laden expressions that are considered to be important when being together with other people, have only recently become part of the upper secondary education. The expressions mentioned are: responsible, independent, creative, interpersonal skills, readiness for change, international understanding, and environmental consciousness.

It is worth noticing that there is no direct continuation of the priorities of the values from the primary education. Still, there is evidently

an agreement that it is important that children and young people understand that Denmark is part of the international society and consequently of vital importance that we decide our attitude to the outside world. When the primary education tries to give the children an understanding of other cultures, and the upper secondary education aims at giving the young people international understanding there is a possibility that they are enabled to take an ethical stand to a large number of the conflicts of values which may arise when meeting other cultures, e. g. conflicts because of different view of human nature or conflicts related to human rights.

Values in 2000 – Towards a New Culture in the World

In 1999 a large world-wide research was implemented. 53,418 persons in all from 61 countries were interviewed, most of the interviewed persons answered that a happy family life and a good health are the most important things for them in life. A good health is most important in 37 of the 61 countries, a happy family life is most important in 16 countries. An overall survey shows that a happy family life and a good health are given the highest priority in 50 of the 61 countries.

The question was as follows: In your opinion, which two things are the most important in life? The list of priority looked as follows:

1. A good health
2. A happy family life
3. A job
4. To live in freedom
5. To live in a country without war
6. To live in a country without violence and corruption
7. To have a high standard of living
8. To be true to my religion
9. To have an education

First and foremost can be said that of course there is a great difference in the priority of values in the various countries. Education is

given the lowest priority on the overall survey, however, it may well have been given highest priority in some countries because education and information form the basis of some of the other values. Information concerning the prevention of illnesses is the very foundation of a good health and education and work are closely connected. It is a precondition of the wish to live in freedom and live in a country without violence, and corruption that the citizens are able to make democratic decisions, and that they acknowledge debate and dialogue as the only weapons. Debate and dialogue are learnt and trained through being together and debating in educational connections.

In the next place can be said concerning the priorities of the answers in this until now largest international research of values, that there are signs that we are moving towards the creation of a new world culture. This is supported by the fact that the world is becoming smaller, and that the populations are getting more closely connected through international co-operation, a rising activity in travelling, the media, internet, and electronics mail.

The development towards a world culture with common values has been searched for many years. In an interview the 9th January 1987 Halfdan Mahler, Danish Secretary General of WHO said, "If we do not work towards a collective and common set of values there will be no UN-system in 2000 (...) I do not think that the world in its present irrational state will become so rational that there will be a general agreement on a common system of values – and still we have to fight for it."

However, there is no reason to conclude that we have reached the point of having a common system of values. On the contrary, there are indications that the West has neglected to give a sufficiently high priority to the protection of the human rights. Less than every sixth citizen of the world has the experience that the human rights are respected in his homeland, and even though dissatisfaction is much smaller in Western Europe than in a number of African and Southeastasian countries, massive efforts are necessary in the time to come. When the peoples of the world are able to realise that consideration for the sovereignty of a country forms the shield against injustice and atrocities to mankind, it shows that there is still a long way to go before we reach an agreement concerning a

common system of values where human rights are given a high priority.

At the turn of the century Kofi Annan, Secretary General to UN, said in an interview: "Slowly, but surely a common norm against violent suppression of minorities will develop, and this will and must be more important than the sovereignty of the states." This development must take place through the grassroots and the NGO's. A common norm cannot be decided at world conferences for those in power, it must sprout up as a result of the indignation with infringement and suppression. And the indignation is here. The citizen of the world makes demands on the UN. Almost half of the respondents of the research emphasize that they think that the protection of human rights is the most important task for the UN. The world citizen emphasizes the prevention of wars through intervention as being the second most important task for the UN.

If we are to develop a common norm against suppression, this must take place through a deliberate influence of values in the homes and at school. In the homes the parents have the possibility of influencing the child to be critical towards abuse of power and tyranny. Human rights are not only rights to be used in society or to be called attention to as being the main topic at conferences. Human rights originate in being a human being, that is to say from the very first beginning of being human. And it follows naturally that the woman is the first human being to protect the rights of the child, and to act for it.

The parents are models for their children. Values, norms, and attitudes may be debated and given various priorities, and there is not necessarily agreement between attitudes and actions. If the parents or the teachers talk of respecting the individual without doing so within the homes or at school, the child will get the understanding that human rights are non-committal. If the child notices that the value of equal-worth in daily life implies that the value of the daughter or the woman is given a lower priority than the son or the husband it will be difficult to claim that the child takes democracy and the democratic processes of decision seriously. Democracy starts at the conception – through the accept of the equal value of the genders. Democracy is trained from birth through the dialogue between mother and child, it is trained through the child-

hood, it is practised in school, and respected in adult life. Girls become adult women, and therefore decisionmakers – not only concerning their own lives, but also concerning the future generations.

Enlightenment in the Information Society

The concept of enlightenment is deemed to be the familiarity and knowledge which encourage the ability of independent, unprejudiced thinking and understanding. Therefore, enlightenment is not knowledge imparted with the aim of the individual acquire a certain way of thinking, a certain interpretation of life, a certain view of humanity or development. Instead it is characteristic of enlightenment that a human being – against a background of knowledge – arrives at an interpretation or understanding of life.

According to previously stated the concept of enlightenment is more than just giving information or imparting knowledge. The concept of enlightenment implies that not only knowledge is imparted (the intellectual aspect), but it has to engage (the emotional aspect). Enlightenment must elucidate a certain problem, and consequently this problem can be discussed. Even though the person imparting knowledge takes up a certain attitude the receiver is free to take another line. The most important is that enlightenment gives the individual an insight in the coherence of problems. Thus a possibility is created that the individual gains a deeper coherent intellectual understanding of problems and engages him/herself emotionally, binding, and with responsibility in them. Enlightenment is the concern of each individual so that he/she is given the belief that he/she is able to act, thus helping change unsatisfactory conditions. Schematically outlined enlightenment can be defined by the following characteristics, which are not put in order of priority:

- Imparts knowledge of a certain problem (the intellectual aspect). Engages emotionally (the emotional aspect)
- Illustrates the whole complex of problems from various angles
- Among other things it covers an interpretation of life and the meaning of life
- Tries to explain misapprehensions.

- Is relevant (an acknowledged susceptibility of influence)
- Encourages independent thinking
- Encourages conversation
- Encourages personal meetings

The intention of letting life enlightenment form the basis of popular education is difficult to implement in our highly technological information society. There are several reasons for this:

Smaller World – More Information

First and foremost because an inverse proportional condition has entered our lives. The smaller the world has become the greater are our possibilities of being informed about life in other parts of the world. The quantity of information is enormous. In the course of just one day we are demanded to take a position on a wealth of important and essential issues which we receive through the media, and in most cases the information is dealing with life and death, true or false, good and evil.

The information in the media concerning the problems around the world is given in such large quantities and at the same time in such short extracts that there is a danger that this communication leaves us to be viewers or listeners. We have not got the time to get a thorough knowledge of one problem until the next is presented. We are left with the impression that the intention of this information is not that we take a position on what is right or wrong, good or evil, or that it is expected that we will act. We are just to be kept informed.

Greater Knowledge –Less Coherence

Secondly development has shown that even though our knowledge of the world has increased, our ability to understand life as part of a greater whole has diminished. In the present situation we have lost the sense of seeing the complexity of life. We think that life consists of small parts, which we can deal with separately. We

have used technology to overcome poverty and to raise the duration of life. However, we have not noticed that in step with this new problems arise which we also have to solve by using technology. Thus technology has become a coherent system which at the same time determines and threatens our existence. On the one hand we cannot live without technological possibilities. On the other hand we are, to a greater and greater extent, thrown on the technological experts when a new problem arises. Thus the general idea is lost – each problem is solved without considering the complexity of life. We have lost the general overview, lost the possibility of seeing the problems of the world as a whole, lost the possibility of seeing our own position in a coherent way.

Our lacking sense of seeing our own and the world's problems in a coherent way does not make the individual feel that there may be coherence at all. We accept a sort of everyday consciousness where the individual takes a position only on the everyday problems and not any further. We are not able to start from the general when we have to analyse the advantages and disadvantages *or* new projects. Primarily we only consider the advantages and do not take the time to debate the disadvantages, which the projects will show in the long run – for the future generations.

It does not help that our knowledge is getting greater and greater and that we get more and more information if we will not, or dare not, take a position on development, at the same time aiming at seeing the general idea and coherence of our whole existence. However, this needs time. Time for meditation and time to consider whether we can find other solutions than the ones we are presented with. It is often maintained that we have no time to hesitate. We have to take a stance so that we are not late in participating in the further technological development and in finding the possibilities of creating the perfect society. The perfect society is a society where there is a possibility of adapting man to development and not the contrary.

In many connections it is said that we, already from literature, have learnt to know how a perfect society would be to live in. We cannot state that it has taken us by surprise that many of the future perspectives, which prose and poetry have shown us, have already become a reality. And we cannot maintain that researchers have not

formerly stated that we would lose our general view and the ability to see the complexity of life if we did not take the time to hesitate, the time to consider, and the time to talk to each other. To talk together in a way which life enlightenment inspires to: as an interaction between scientists and the people. However, exactly here we encounter problems.

More Experts, Less Understanding

While on the other hand we have gained greater and greater knowledge, this knowledge has resulted in the fact that we have lost coherence and overview. In the Western European countries we have chosen to leave many difficult problems concerning life to the experts. In the West we have established councils of ethics and employ experts on ethical questions who, on behalf of the population, make themselves conversant with the flow of information from the various fields of research, and we have left it to these experts to make the correct decisions concerning right and wrong, good and evil.

The reasons why we have made the decision to let the experts take the responsibility for our decisions concerning the future of man is not only the unpredictability, but also that we have no longer a common language. We do not understand what the experts say, and reversely the experts express that this or that problem is so difficult that it is useless to explain it for the population. A large number of problems, which are considered to be too difficult to explain, are questions concerning the basis of our lives. For instance Nature which is the very source of our lives. Or it may be problems concerning life and death. Or questions concerning our country. It is maintained that our language is no longer adequate, and consequently it is no longer possible for the people and the scholars to communicate. My postulate is that our language is very adequate, indeed. We have words and expressions which can ask even the most difficult questions, and we can find words to answer these questions. However, when the experts use other concepts and words – which are difficult to understand – the population give up, and the experts can –with some justice – assert that the population

do not understand the issues. Thus the way is prepared for the experts to take over the decision-making process.

Development demands insight and knowledge, however it is evidently difficult to impart this insight and knowledge in a language that makes a dialogue possible. Enlightenment is threatened in step with the fact that huge sums of money is spent upon imparting information with the sole purpose of making the population understand and appreciate that the experts' decisions are correct. Very easily this results in imparting results on which the population have to take a position. Do we want progress and accept the available possibilities, or do we not? In such cases we preclude ourselves from taking part in the considerations on what we want to encourage and what we want to impede or delay. Instead we have to take a position on the results of already finished research.

Concurrently with the fact that we have built up a society where the experts – to a wide extent – decide what we are going to take a position on, scientific research shows that the population feel that public debate concerning development is a debate for the elite. Instances in support of it can be quoted that the majority of the population feel that if they try to interfere in public debate concerning our future they are either not allowed to express themselves, or their intervention is used to legitimate the debate – a democratic veneer of a decision-making process which cannot really be influenced. Conversation and dialogue disappear as the basis of the democratic decision-making process, the individual gives up.

Imparting Information

Further the intentions of enlightenment is threatened by the rapidly increasing imparting information, in the shape of campaigns. It is characteristic of campaigns that in a very short time they are able to pass on and forward a message to a maximum number of people. Often the issue is that a certain social problem results in anxiety, and that the population must be informed about this problem in order to minimise it or change the further development. For instance, the cause of this anxiety may be the results of investigations and opinion polls that prove new knowledge or show that

the problem is greater than generally believed. Another reason to implement campaigns may be that the intention is to spend financial resources on a certain problem.

Further it is characteristic of campaigns that they are implemented at certain times and are repeated at intervals, however, without any grounds for the space between repetitions and the number of repetitions. Further it is characteristic of campaigns that the message is simple and clear, for instance formulated as a slogan which can be caught and understood quickly by a maximum number of people with widely different preconditions. Finally, it is characteristic of campaigns that they 'want to do the good', that the message tries to make the population agree on the recommendations from the experts and the state.

To summarize, information campaigns are characteristic of

- A mass-produced message
- Recurrent, often at certain intervals
- Clear and well-planned material
- The use of slogans
- One-way communication
- Definite target group
- No personal meetings between sender and receiver
- Not acknowledged influence
- Possibility of misinterpretations

The information, which the population gets, is far from the intentions of enlightenment, because conversation and dialogue are missing. It becomes an imparting of knowledge from experts to the people: Listen, understand what is being said, and act accordingly.

Visions

Our visions for our present life emanate from something. On the one hand our visions for the future steer our actions in the present time. On the other hand it is our experiences from the past and the present that steer our visions for the future.

This demands to be further elaborated. If our visions for the future steer our actions in the present time this implies that we are able to imagine a future which we have never lived in, have not experienced, and know nothing about. In short, we have to imagine something non-existing, we have to try to evoke the picture of a society and its people twenty to thirty years ahead. How do they live? How is society arranged? What are the possibilities for people to develop and thrive? How is the global situation? Are there possibilities for the peoples of the world to get food and water?

First and foremost this demands fantasy. It demands that we are able to set fantasy free and ignore the limitations we often meet in our attempt at solving the present problems. Secondly it demands that people with widely different experiences, education, and age join together and formulate proposals for action, based upon their individual experiences. Thirdly it demands that enlightenment is linked together with a belief in and intention of action. Today the concept of enlightenment must contain a demand to dare to choose, dare to participate actively in the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil, true and false.

In the future it will not be sufficient to offer an education that gives the information that we belong to a certain people and that we are mutually responsible to manage this if this responsibility does not result in action. In the future, enlightenment concerning life must aim at the participants become debating and active citizens. Such enlightenment may result in anger and indignation because our right to express ourselves and be co-determining concerning development has either been taken from us or just slipped away. The next step must be to gain sufficient insight in what constitutes the real adversary. It is not a question of trying to acquire expert knowledge to be able to debate like experts with experts. On the contrary, the participants must be able to point out the conditions that contribute to the fact those fundamental democratic principles or basic values are overruled. Only thus there is a possibility of contributing to change development into another direction.

Finally, the next step must be to express our visions for the future we do not yet know. Visions concerning how we want our children to live, how we ourselves, in our old age, together with others can

be able to use our experiences of life, how we want our relation with the rest of the world to be, how the resources of nature can be used without exploiting it, etc. In other words, a basic idea is wanted which will result in plans and action.

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Education and Enlightenment plays a central role in the Danish society. Knowledge and enlightenment are the keys to understanding and success in an ever more complex and changeable world.

In the Danish society it is therefore important to ensure that education becomes a natural part of people's lives and their participation in social life, and that the education system can continue to ensure the vocational and personal qualifications which are needed in a modern high-technological society based on democratic principles.